

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicant appreciates the Examiner's acknowledgement of allowable subject matter contained in claims 3-8 and 11-16.

Claims 1-2 and 9 stand rejected under §102 as being anticipated by Takaishi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,646,824). In response, Applicants amended independent claims 1 and 9 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 3 and 11, respectively. Accordingly, the rejection is considered moot.

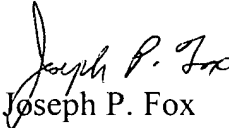
Allowable claims 4-6 and 14-16 are written in independent form, and are also considered allowable. New claims 17-19 are also believed to be in condition for allowance based on their chain of dependency from allowable independent claims. Accordingly, allowance of new claims 17-19 is earnestly solicited.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

January 24, 2005
300 South Wacker Drive, Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 360-0080
Customer No. 24978

By: 
Joseph P. Fox
Registration No. 41,760